

Molecular Characterisation of the Candidate  
Region for *bronx waltzer*: a Mouse Model of  
Hearing Impairment

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2005

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## *Declaration*

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not, whether in the same or different form, been presented to this or any other university in support of an application for any degree other than that for which I am now a candidate

## *Acknowledgements*

First and foremost my thanks go to my supervisor Karen Steel. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to carry out this research, for your advice, guidance and support throughout, as well as for your life-saving “open-door” policy. If I ever work for anyone half as skilful, as dedicated, as assertive and yet as compassionate as you I shall consider myself very lucky.

I owe so much gratitude to so many of my labmates that I hardly know where to begin. Actually that’s a lie, of course I have to start with Sarah. From being my sole companion when we moved from Nottingham, through reassuring me and listening to me (and occasionally even feeding me!) during the “lost months” of writing up, right up to *voluntarily* reading and commenting on my *entire* thesis – you have been more than I ever wished for or deserved in a friend. The rest of Team 27 have all helped to keep me sane in their own ways, but I am especially grateful to Andy Penn for his help with the vast number of PCR reactions required to resequence all my candidate gene exons.

I would also like to thank the members of the “old lab” at the IHR in Nottingham, in particular Alex Erven, Liz Quint, Kelvin Hawker, Ralph Holme and Angela Lucas for patiently teaching me the techniques and ways of the lab, as well as Kathy Davies and Neil Glenn for taking such excellent care of my crazy little mice. Going even further back, my thanks go to the people who worked on various aspects of this exciting project before me – Tracy Bussoli, Mikey Cheong, Annemarie Kelly and Claudia Noguiera.

For assistance with my zebrafish work I thank Derek Stemple, Matthew Clark, Elizabeth Busch and Christian Söllner, as well as Agnieszka Rzadzinska for help with phalloidin staining and using the confocal microscope. I also thank the ExoSeq and Sequencing groups for help with exon resequencing.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my family, who are almost but not entirely as crazy as my mice, and to whom this thesis is dedicated. To Grandma and Grandad, to Nanna and Mossy, and to my parents Debby and Jeff who have always supported me unwaveringly in everything I’ve wanted to do, so long as they believed it would make me happy. Well, making you proud will make me happy. To the imminently future Dr. Keith Taylor: “Ha! I did it first!”, and to the possibly future Dr. Aidan Taylor: “Are you *really* sure you want to put yourself through this?!” I love you all so very much. xxx

## *Abbreviations*

ABR	Auditory brainstem response
AHCs	Auditory hair cells
BAC	Bacterial artificial chromosome
bHLH	basic Helix Loop Helix
BLAST	Basic local alignment search tool
bp	Base pairs
CAPs	Compound action potentials
cDNA	Complementary DNA
cM	centiMorgan
CMs	Cochlear microphonics
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
dATP	2'-deoxyadenosine-5'-triphosphate
dbSPL	Decibels sound pressure level
dCTP	2'-deoxycytidine-5'-triphosphate
ddH <sub>2</sub> O	Double distilled deionised water
dGTP	2'-deoxyguanosine-5'-triphosphate
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
dNTP	Deoxynucleoside triphosphate
dpc	days <i>post coitum</i>
dpf	days post fertilisation
DPOEs	Distortion product otoacoustic emissions

ds	Double stranded
dTTP	2'-deoxythymidine-5'-triphosphate
E	Embryonic day
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EMBL	European molecular biology laboratory
ENU	N-ethyl-N-nitrosourea
ESTs	Expressed sequence tags
EUCIB	European collaborative interspecific backcross mapping panels
g	Grams
GER	Greater epithelial ridge
HCl	Hydrochloric acid
HMM	Hidden Markov model
hpf	hours post fertilisation
HPLC	High performance liquid chromatography
HTGS	High throughput genome sequence
IHCs	Inner hair cells
IVF	<i>in vitro</i> fertilisation
K <sup>+</sup>	Potassium ion
Kb	Kilobase
L	Litres
LB	Luria-Bertani medium
LER	Lesser epithelial ridge
LOD	Log of odds
Mb	Megabase
mg	milligrams

MgCl <sub>2</sub>	Magnesium chloride
ml	millilitres
MO	Morpholino oligonucleotide
MRC	Medical Research Council
mRNA	Messenger RNA
Na <sup>+</sup>	Sodium ion
NaCl	Sodium chloride
NaOH	Sodium hydroxide
NCBI	National center for biotechnology information
OD	Optical density
OHCs	Outer hair cells
OMIM	Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man
OTOTO	Osmium tetroxide-thiocarbohydrazide procedure
P	Post-natal day
PBS	Phosphate buffer saline solution
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
pg	picograms
pH	potential of Hydrogen
QTL	Quantitative trait locus
RFLP	Restriction fragment length polymorphism
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
RNAi	RNA interference
RNase	Ribonuclease
rpm	Revolutions per minute
RT-PCR	Reverse transcription-PCR

s.e.	standard error
SCs	Supporting cells
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulphate
SEM	Scanning electron microscopy/microscope
SNP	Single nucleotide polymorphism
SPs	Summating potentials
ss	Single stranded
SSCP	Single strand conformation polymorphism
ssDNA	Single stranded DNA
SSLP	Simple sequence length polymorphisms (microsatellites)
STS	Sequence tagged sites
T0.1E	10mM Tris/0.1mM EDTA buffer
TBE	Tris/borate/EDTA buffer
TE	10mM Tris/1mM EDTA buffer
TEM	Transmission electron microscopy/microscope
Tris	Tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane
U	Enzyme units
µg	micrograms
µl	microlitres
µm	micrometre
UTR	Untranslated region
UV	Ultraviolet
WGS	Whole genome shotgun
YAC	Yeast artificial chromosome

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## *Abstract*

*bronx waltzer* is an autosomal recessive mouse mutation causing abnormalities in the inner ear which result in mutant mice having deficiencies in both the auditory and vestibular systems. Homozygous mice exhibit hyperactivity, circling behaviour, head tossing and failure to respond to sound. Hearing loss in these mice is due to degeneration of the inner hair cells in the organ of Corti, while the vestibular phenotype is a result of sensory hair cell degeneration in the maculae and cristae. This phenotype is visible from E17.5, shortly after the hair cells differentiate, making *bronx waltzer* an interesting model for the understanding of the molecular basis of development and function of the inner ear as well as for hereditary deafness.

The mutation was previously localised to a 2.8Mb region of chromosome 5 using a backcross of 1073 mice to the inbred strain 101/H. There remained 17 backcross mice with recombinations within this interval, and thus new polymorphic markers have been sought in order to reduce the size of the candidate region. With the identification of two new proximal flanking markers, the size of the critical region has been reduced to 2.45Mb, with the exclusion of seven candidate genes.

The remaining 52 genes currently annotated within the region have been systematically assessed and functional studies carried out on those thought most likely to be the causative agent for *bronx waltzer*. These have included expression screening using inner ear cDNA and gene knockdown using morpholinos designed to target zebrafish orthologs. In addition, large scale exon resequencing of all the coding regions within the interval has been carried out and 90.63% coverage achieved overall, with complete coding sequence obtained for 23 candidate genes. These new data have provided a means of critically evaluating the candidacy of genes within the *bronx waltzer* critical region.